The Chronicles of Addington Peace FLETCHER ROBINSON

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MR CORAN'S ELECTION

Ten o'clock! Big Ben left no doubt about it; for the giant clock in the tower of the house of parliament is a noisy neighbor. The last stroke thundered out as I climbed the stairs that led to the modest lodging of Inspector Addington Peace, and silence had fallen as I knocked at his door. I was alone that night and in the mood when a man escapes from himself to seek a friend.

I found the little detective at his open window, staring across the tumbled roofs to where the abbey towers rose under the summer moon. The evening breeze that came creeping up with the tide blew gratefully after the heat of the July day. He glanced at me over his shoulder with a short nod of welcome.

"Even the police grow sentimental on such a night," I suggested,

"Or philosophic."

"The reflections of Diogenes the detective, or the Aristotle of Scotland Yard," I laughed. "May I inquire as to the cause of such profound thought?'

He held out a slip of paper, which I took and carried to the central lamp. It was an old newspaper clipping, stained and blurred, relating in six lines how James Coran, described as a student, had been charged at the Bow street police court with drunkenness, followed by an aggravated assault on the constable who arrested him. He was fined three pounds or seven days. That was all.

"Not a subject of earth-shaking importance," I said.

"No; but it has proved a sufficient excuse for blackmail."

"Then the victim is a fool," I an swered hotly. "Why, from the look of the paper the affair must have taken place a dozen years ago."

"Thirty-two years this month." "Which means that the riotous student is now a man of over fifty. If James Coran has gone down the hill, the past can't hurt him now; if he has led a respectable life, surely he can afford to neglect the scamp who threatens to rake up so mild a scan dal. Blackmail for a spree back in the seventles-it's ridiculous, inspector.

The little man stood with his hands behind him and his head on one side, watching me with benevolent amuse ment. When he spoke it was in the ponderous manner which he some times assumed, a manner that always reminded me of a university professor explaining their deplorable errors to his class.

"Mr. James Coran is a respectable middle-class widower who lives with his sister Rebecca and two daughters in the little town of Brendon, twentyfour miles from London. He arrives at the 'Fashionable Clothing company -his London establishment in Oxford street-at ten o'clock in the morning, leaving for home by the 5:18. In his spare time he performs a variety of public duties at Brendon. He is a recognized authority on drains, and has produced a pamphlet on dust carts. As a temperance orator his local reputation is great, and his labors in the cause of various benevolent associations have been suitably commem orated by a presentation clock, three inkstands, and a silver tankard. His interests are limited to Brendon and Oxford street; of world movements he thinks no more than the caterpillar on a leaf considers the general welfare of the cabbage patch. Please remember the facts, Mr. Phillips, in consideration of his case.

"Six months ago an envelope arrived at his house with two inclosures. One was the newspaper clipping you hold; the other a letter denouncing him as a hypocrite, and warning him that unless the sum of twenty pounds was placed in the locker of a little summer house at the end of his garden the writer would expose him to all Brendon in his true character as a convicted drunkard.

"Coran was in despair. He had imagined his unfortunate spree long forgotten. Not even his own relatives were aware of it. He was trying for a seat on the county council; the election was due in a month, and he re-Hed for his success on the support of the temperance party. As an election weapon the old scandal could be used with striking effect. So he paid-as many a better man has been foot enough to do under like circumstan-

ces.
"In three days—on Saturday, that is -the election takes place. This

to the first, save that the demand was for a hundred pounds. He had just sense enough to see that if he allowed himself to be blackmailed again it would merely encourage further attempt at extortion. So when he arrived in town, he took a cab to Scotland Yard. I heard his story, and caught the next train down to Brendon. I did not call at the house, but gathered a few details concerning him and his family. In all particulars he seems to have spoken the truth."

"Must the hundred pounds be placed in the summer house tonight?" "No. The blackmailer gave him a

day to collect the money. It must be in the locker tomorrow night by eleven o'clock."

"Which means that you will watch the place and pull out the fish as he takes the batt. It seems simple enough, anyhow."

"Oh, yes," he said. "But it is the faulty sense of proportion in Coran which provides the interest in the case. Even at the time the scandal was no very serious matter. What must be his frame of mind that it should terrorize him after all these years?"

When I left him half an hour later it was with the promise that I should have first news of the comedy's conclusion-for a tragedy it certainly was not, save for the blackmailer, if Peace should catch him.

The following afternoon I was sitting in my studio with the cigarettethat comes so pleasantly after tea and buttered toast-between my lips, when my servant, Jacob Hendry, thrust in his head to announce visitors. They came hard upon his heels-a long, gray-whiskered man in the lead, and the inspector trotting behind. As they cleared the door the little detective twisted round his companion and waved an introductory hand.

"This is Mr. James Coran," he said 'We want your assistance, Mr. Phil-

The long man stood staring at me and screwing his hands together in evident agitation. He had a hollow, melancholy face, a weak mouth, and eyes of an indecisive gray. From his square-toed shoes to the bald patch on the top of his head he was extremely, almost flagrantly, respectable,

"I am taking a great liberty, sir," he said humbly, "but you are, as it were, a straw to one who is sinking beneath the waters of affliction. Do you, by chance, know the town of Brendon?"

"I have never been so fortunate as to visit it," I told him,

"I understand from the police officer here that you have traveled abroad. Accustomed, therefore, to the corruption that taints the municipal life of other cities, you can hend the whole-souled enthusiasm with which we of Brendon approach the duties, may I say the sacred trust, of administering to the sanitary and moral welfare of our county. Those whom we select must be of unstained reputation. From a place on the sports committee of the flower show I myself have risen through successive grades until even the houses of parliament seemed within the limit of legitimate ambition. But now, sir, now it seems that, through a boyish indiscretion when a student at the Regent's street polytechnic, I may be denounced in my advancing years as a roysterer, a tippler, almost a convicted criminal. They would not hesitate. Mark my words, sir, if Horledge and Panton-my opponent's chief supporters in Saturday's election-are informed of these facts, they will mention them on platforms, they may even display them on hoardings.

He paused, sighed deeply, and wiped his face with a large silk pocket handkerchief. The situation was ridiculous enough, yet not without a certain pathos underlying the humor, for the man was sincerely in earnest.

"If I can help you, Mr. Coran, I and at your disposal," I told him.

"It is a matter of considerable delicacy," he said. "My younger daughter, Emily, has formed an attachment which is most disagreeable to me." "Indeed." I murmured.

"The young man, Thomas Appleton by name, is of more than doubtful character. Miss Rebecca, my sister, has seen him boating on the Thames in the company of ladies whose appearance was-er-distinctly theatri-

"You surprise me." "He has been known to visit music

halls." "Did Miss Rebecca see him there, too?"

"Certainly not, sir; but she has it from a sure source. It was obviously regarded by railway men generally he sold it; anyway, he's always call- Mabel of her six-year-old brother. morning he received a letter similar my duty to forbid him the house. I as very instructive.

performed that duty, and extorted a scandal. You understand the situapromise from my daughter that she would cease to communicate with him, In my belief, it is he who has discovered the scandal to which I need not again refer, and, in revenge, is levying this blackmail. The law shall strike him, if there is justice left in England."

"And where do I come in?" I asked, for he had paused in a flurry of indignation.

"Perhaps I had better explain." Peace interposed. "Owing to this unfortunate love affair, it is plain that no member of Mr. Coran's family must learn that this young man is suspected or that steps are being taken for his arrest. It would not be unreasonable to fear that he might be warned. I am staying with Mr. Coran tonight, but I do not want to go alone. might take an assistant from the Yard, but it is hard to pick a man who has not 'criminal investigation department' stamped upon him. You look innocent enough, Mr. Phillips. Will you come with us, and lend me a

I agreed at once. It could not fall to be an amusing adventure. After some discussion, it was arranged that Peace and I should be introduced as business friends of Mr. Coran, who had asked us down to Brendon on a sudden invitation. A telegram was sent off to that effect.

For the first fifteen minutes of the train we shared a crowded compartment. Gradually, however, our companions dropped away until we were left to ourselves. Mr. Coran was in evident hesitation of mind. He shifted about, screwing his hands together with a most doleful countenance. When he commenced to speak he leant forward as if afraid that the very cushions might overhear him.

"I have mentioned my sister Rebecca," he said. "She is a woman of remarkable character."

"Indeed," I murmured, for he chose to address me more directly.

'We have differed lately on several points of-er-local interest. It is very important that she should not learn the cause of my appeal to the police. Anything that aroused her suspicions might lead to consequences very disagreeable to myself."

"I will be discreet."

"My daughters will-er-benefit largely under her will. She would cut them out of it without hesitation if she learnt that their father had been connected with so-er-disgraceful a

tion?"

"Perfectly. It must render your position additionally unpleasant." He sighed and relapsed into a melancholy silence, in which the train

drew up at Brendon station. A cab was in waiting, into which we climbed. A couple of turns, a short descent, and we drew up at a gate in a long

wall of flaming brick. As we walked up the drive I looked

carefully about me. The house was also of red brick and of mixed architecture. I believe the architect had intended it for the Tudor period, with variations suggested by modern sanitary requirements. The garden before the windows was of considerable size, with laurels and quick-growing shrubs lining the edge of a lawn and several winding walks. At the farther end a thatched roof, rising amongst the young trees, showed the position of the summer house which played so important a part in the story we had heard.

It was striking six as we entered the hall. Our host led us straight to our rooms on the first floor. We had been told not to bring dress clothes. so that ten minutes later we were ready to descend to the drawing room.

Mr. Coran's daughters, a pair of pretty, bright-faced girls, were seated in those careless attitudes which denote the expected appearance of strangers. Miss Rebecca, a tall, spectacled female, whose sixty years had changed curves for acute angles, reposed in the window, reading a volume of majestic size. She laid it down with a thump, removed her glasses and received us with great modesty and decorum. The inspector and a fox terrier, that set up a barking as we entered, were the only members of the party that seemed natural and at ease.

I found the dinner pass pleasantly enough, despite the gloom that radi- tures, and moving pictures would ated from the brother and sister.

Emily, the victim of the "unfortu-Twice we dared to laugh, though the neglected. reproving eyes of the elders were constantly upon us. In the intervals of my talk with her I obtained the keenest enjoyment from listening to the conversation of Peace and Miss Rebecca. The lady cross-examined him very much as if he were a prisoner accused of various grave and monstrous offenses. Upon the question of antivivisection she was especially urgent. (CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED.)

RURAL SCHOOL HAS MISSION

Where One Bushel of Corn Grew Before Two Are Now Secured by Methods Just Brought Out.

(By RAY P. SPEAR.)

The training of country children to grow two bushels of corn where one bushel grew before is a commendable thing. To bring this about many changes may be made in the programs of most country schools. Arithmetic problems may be worked out in terms of corn and potatoes and cows. Reading may be largely confined to the subjects of interest to country boys and girls. Essays on farm topics may be written in place of the usual parsing and other grammar work. This will lay a foundation for much practical work in the later years of school life.

Older students trained in the elementary principles of agriculture could conduct germination tests of corn and grain. Herds could be tested, rations could be worked out for live stock, records could be kept of poultry, garments could be made for home, and the art of cooking could be cultivated. These and many other practical things could be worked out with the school house as a center.

Added to this is the social pleasure that could be obtained by everyone in the community when a permanent interest in the school was established. Basket socials, evening entertainments, picnics, school house fairs, lecmake the rural school a real factor in the social improvement of the nate attachment," quite captured my school district. The country school fancy, though I am not a ladies' man. has a mission which should not be

TELEPHONE TEACHES A BIRD

Most Original Method of Instructing Parrots in Art of Elecution Employed in London.

London has a school of elecution for birds. Trained parrots are made teachers of other parrots by being placed near the pupils' cages. While whistles and various musical instruments are used in giving instructions. one of the most original methods of



Parrot Listening.

teaching is by the employment of the telephone, says the Popular Electricity.

With the feathered pupil perched upon a stick in the instructor's hand, a telephone is held in such a position that Polly may readily distinguish the words or sounds emitted, and whether from the oddity of the thing or from some other cause the bird invariably pays strict attention.

Sockless.

Bennie was looking over his brother's shoulder at the pictures in a new geography.

"What are those men with the bushy hair?" he asked. "Those are Australian aborigines,"

replied Ben. "Don't they wear any more clothes than that?"

"That's about all."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the little brother, "what in the world do they hang up on Christmas?"

A Good Loser.

A Rhode Island politician who was a prominent candidate in the late election came home one day much provoked at some misdemeanor which his son, aged ten, had committed.

"Frank," he said, sternly, "do you know, sir, that you are a candidate for a whipping?"

"I hope I'll be defeated, father," was young Frank's reply, as he looked up playfully at his father.—Harper's Bazar.

Not Unlikely.

"Well, my boy," said the visitor to Bobby, "I suppose some day you expect to step into your father's shoes." "Oh, I suppose so," said Bobby, gloomily. "I've been wearin' out everythin' else he wears since mother learned how to cut 'em down for me."

Wise Brother.

"What's a stepbrother?" asked little "A stepbrother." he replied, "is me sitting on the front step. the second section of the second section of the second section sections and second sections of the section sections of the second sections of the second sections of the second section sections of the section sections of the section section section sections of the section section section sections of the section sectio

MUST HAVE HAD BUSY LIFE FORCE OF FEMININE POLICE

Boer Woman Surely Holds the World's Record for Her Many and Varied Marriage Ventures.

The world's record in matrimonial ventures is probably held by Mrs. Thelia M. de Beer, a widow, seventyeight years of age, residing at Pretoria, Transvaal. At the age of eighteen she married Petrus Jacobus Lubbe, who died, leaving her with one child. Ten months later she took another husband, a widower with three children. A year and five months afterwards he also died, leaving her with four children. Within five months she married for the third time, another widower, this time with seven children. With him she lived for eleven years, and had seven children, when he also died. After five years widowhood she married for the fourth time, on this occasion a widower with eight children. With him she had four children, and after eleven years, he, too, died. Five years later she mar ried a man named Hendrik Klopper. Another eleven years elapsed, and then her fifth husband died, leaving her with ten children. In two years' time she contracted another marriage with Hendrik Van Wyk, a widower, who brought five children to swell the family. Another eleven years passed, and he, too, went the way of his five predecessors, his death occurring only recently. Mrs. de Beer is now mother and stepmother of 49 children and the grandmother of 270,

Steel Tie Easily Best. The potentialities of the steel tie appear to have been demonstrated convincingly by the experience of the Bessemer and Lake Erie railroad in using them during a period covering eight years. The Carnegie steel tie is a simple symmetrical I-beam section and weighs 180 pounds for the standard length of eight feet six inches. About 1,500,000 of these ties are now in use, and because of the density of the traffic of the road where the steel ties are used the service of the ties in question is man we bought it from is sorry now

Norwegian Women, With Official Posttion, Are Given Appropriate Duties to Perform.

The appointment of another woman at Christlania now brings the feminine police force in Norway up to seven, three of whom are in Christiania, two at Bergen, one in Stavanger, and one in Christiansand.

The special duty of the chief policewoman in Christiania, Sergeant Osen, is to keep under surveillance girls and women suspected of living immoral lives and female beggars, while her two colleagues interrogate women tramps, and, if deserving, render them help, look after the children and see that they are kept off the street as vendors and beggars.

The policewomen all perform occasional night duty and patrol some of the worst quarters of the city. With the exception of the policewomen at Christiansand, who wear a complete official uniform, the women are dressed in plain clothes, only wearing green capes bearing a small medallion stamped with the crown and lion of Norway, to distinguish them from ordinary citizens.

Boy's Good Guess.

The story is told of Judge McCanless of Wichita, who has the distinction of being the leanest man in the state, that he was one day walking along a street in Kansas City when he noticed that a hound dog was following him.

After he had gone a block and the dog was still trailing him, he turned to a street gamin and asked: "Boy, what do you suppose that dog is following me for?"

"Well, mister," said the boy, as he looked the judge over from head to foot, "I dunno exactly, but my ides is that he takes you for a bone."-Topeka Capital.

No Doubt.

Visitor-"What lovely furniture!" Little Tommy-"Yes; I think the